

# National Research Centre on Privacy, Harm Reduction and Adversarial Influence Online (REPHRAIN)

## Strategic Funding Call 3 – 17 October 2022

**Closing date: 25 November 2022**

REPHRAIN is an EPSRC funded research centre that forms part of the wider UKRI investment focusing on protecting citizens online. REPHRAIN explores how to keep people safe online while allowing them to fully participate in digital technologies and the contributions they make to innovative, inclusive and healthy economy and society.

REPHRAIN involves researchers in Computer Science, International Relations, Law, Psychology, Management, Design, Digital Humanities, Public Policy, Political Science, Criminology and Sociology. It leads the UK's world-leading interdisciplinary community on protecting citizens online and provide a clear single front door to engage and build capacity with government, industry and citizens.

Since its start in October 2020, the REPHRAIN centre now has a critical mass of over 100 internationally leading experts at 13 UK institutions working across 37 different and diverse research projects. The centre also collaborates with the new UKRI/EPSC Protecting Citizens Online complementary projects based at the University of Surrey, Sheffield Hallam University, Heriot-Watt University and Newcastle University. Further details can be found here <https://www.rephrain.ac.uk/>.

### **Call details**

This is the third REPHRAIN funding call and aims to highlight research questions and challenges that are not currently being addressed by active REPHRAIN projects. A scoping workshop involving REPHRAIN members was undertaken to help identify and formalise the call topics listed below.

The total funding for this call is £500,000 (at 100% FEC), of which 80% will be funded by REPHRAIN. We expect to fund multiple proposals from this fund and will consider larger proposals that address more than one topic area. All funded projects must be completed, with all deliverables, by **29 February 2024**. Proposals should be submitted by **4pm on 25 November 2022** at <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=rephrainsfc3>. The Strategic Funding decision panel will meet **w/c 23 January 2023** and decisions will be communicated **w/c 30 January 2023**.

### **Call topics**

This strategic funding call is for projects that relate to [REPHRAIN's missions and research challenges](#). In addition, we particularly encourage proposals that focus on the following topics:

#### **Protecting privacy at work**

As organisations become more focused on security does this have implications of the privacy of employees particularly in the new working model which incorporates working from home or away from the office? With potential issues arising from using corporate machines for personal use or vice versa or the use of authenticator apps on phone (and how these are set up), how should the boundaries of information protection and responsibility be drawn?

#### **Ensuring privacy for legitimate actors.**

Consideration of how data collection can create monopolies of power and the impact of the use of surveillance mechanisms on users. We particularly encourage empirical studies in this area as well as proposals for new privacy-enhancing technologies to mitigate against monopolies of power.

### **Protecting young people (under 18s) from online harms.**

Given that online harms often disproportionately impact young people, this call spotlights research needed with respect to this specific user group. Proposals on studying online harms to young people as well as protecting them from cyber criminals are particularly welcome. We also encourage proposals considering how censorship and chilling effects are linked to young people and the manner in which they choose to express themselves online.

The above are indicative topics and we welcome proposals on additional related topics.

### **Funding**

The total amount available for this Call will be up to £500,000 at 100% full Economic Cost (fEC), of which 80% fEC (i.e., up to £400,000) will be made available to successful applicants. In practical terms this means that UK HEI researchers should cost their projects using the same process as they would cost a UKRI grant. All costs should be inclusive of VAT and/or any other applicable tax. The duration of work proposed under this Call should not last more than 12 months and should run between **01 March 2023** and **29 February 2024**. REPHRAIN will not reimburse costs associated with the development or submission of a proposal.

**Proposals should be costed and approved by the applicant's organisation before submission.**

### **Submission**

Please submit the proposal as a single PDF by **4pm on the 25 November 2022** using the form and upload system at: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=rephrainsfc3>. If you do not already have an EasyChair account you will need to set one up [here](#). If you already have an account, you should be able to access the REPHRAIN SFC 3 submission page using your current credentials. Please ensure you select the role of author before submitting your proposal.

Submissions should not exceed five pages plus short CVs, comprising:

- 1) The research challenge to be addressed and its alignment with REPHRAIN's missions and RIEI (Responsible Inclusive Ethical Innovation) approach (1 page max)
- 2) Interdisciplinarity objectives (1/2 page max)
- 3) Proposed methodology including clearly defined milestones (1 ½ page max)
- 4) Proposed outcomes and potential for integration with the REPHRAIN toolbox (1 page max)
- 5) Financial summary (divided into directly incurred and allocated staff costs, travel, subsistence and other costs, estates and indirect costs. (1 page max). The costs should be in sufficient detail to allow for value for money judgements to be made.

Please attach short (2 page) CVs for all applicants and named researchers at the end of the proposal. Please ensure the proposal and CVs are merged as one single PDF. A [submission template](#) can be found on the REPHRAIN website.

***All documents must be completed in single-spaced typescript in Arial pt 11 or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size, with margins of at least 2cm. Arial narrow and Calibri are not allowable font types and page limits must not be exceeded. Each section listed above (1-5) should be clearly labelled.***

### **Eligibility**

The Call is open to Higher Education Institutions who can demonstrate a capability to deliver a high-quality programme of research. We strongly encourage applications from researchers in all disciplines and encourage proposals that are interdisciplinary and involve strong engagement and partnerships with non-academic stakeholders. This call will follow the [standard EPSRC eligibility criteria](#).

### **Assessment**

All proposals will be reviewed by at least two expert peer reviewers, and then evaluated by a Strategic Fund decision panel. Applications that are not submitted in the format requested in above, or that are outside of the scope of this call, may be rejected without recourse to peer review.

### **Criteria**

Submissions will be scored by peer reviews across the following domains:

- 1) Understanding of the challenge and its national importance
- 2) Quality and rigour of methodology
- 3) Responsible innovation
- 4) Potential impact and integration with the REPHRAIN toolbox
- 5) Value for money and deliverability
- 6) Team track record, particularly interdisciplinarity of team

### **Grant conditions**

Successful applicants will receive an offer letter that will outline the terms of the sub-contract with REPHRAIN. These are standard UKRI terms and conditions, but with some minor amendments related to the source of funding and relationship with the REPHRAIN research centre.

**Applicants should share these terms with their organisation research contracts team to ensure these terms are acceptable before applying for funding. The terms are non-negotiable and no amendments will be accepted. Copies of the terms and conditions are available [here](#).**

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The long-term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent and the Research Councils together developed the ambitious UKRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. In line with the [UKRI's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion](#), we expect that equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded at all levels and in all aspects of applicants' research proposals.

We are committed to supporting the research community in the diverse ways a research career can be built. Therefore, we welcome applications from researchers who job share, have a part-time contract, need flexible working arrangements or those currently committed to other longer, large existing grants.